

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 05105 050935Z
ACTION SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2453

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 5105

FOR S/S-O ONLY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: XX, US, SW
SUBJ: CURRENT FOREIGN RELATIONS

REF: STATE 282272

1. IN THIS EMBASSY'S VIEW CURRENT FOREIGN RELATIONS IS INVAL-
UABLE AND INDISPENSABLE, AND IT WOULD BE A MAJOR ERROR TO
DROP IT. BUT WE ALSO BELIEVE IT COULD BE IMPROVED A GREAT DEAL.

2. THE DEPARTMENT FORGETS HOW STARVED WE IN THE FIELD ARE FOR
INFORMATION. JUST AS THE MAN WHO STRUCK OIL FOUND IT HARD TO
REMEMBER WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE WHEN HE WAS LIVING ON PEAS AND
FATBACK, SO THOSE SERVING IN WASHINGTON QUICKLY FORGET HOW OUT
OF IT WE IN THE FIELD CONSIDER OURSELVES. THIS IS PARTICULARLY
TRUE WHEN IT COMES TO POLICY.

3. THE DEARTH OF POLICY ORIENTATION IS THE SEVEREST HANDICAP
AMERICAN DIPLOMATS -- AND ESPECIALLY AMBASSADORS -- WORK UNDER.
MOST FOREIGN MINISTRIES INFORM THIER AMBASSADORS WHAT NATIONAL
POLICY IS AND WHAT THEY SHOULD SAY ABOUT IT, SOMETIMES IN VERY
DETAILED FASHION. AMERICAN DIPLOMATS READ THE WIRELESS FILE
TO SEE WHAT JODY POWELL AND HODDING CARTER SAY (AND THE WIRE-
LESS FILE IS PRICELESS), GET INTELLIGNECE INFO (USUALLY
UNRELATED TO POLICY AND NEARLY ALWAYS UNREPEATABLE) FROM CIA
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REPORTS AND INR PAPERS, GET GLIMPSES OF POLICY OUTSIDE
THEIR OWN COUNTRY FROM LATERAL DISTRIBUTION CABLES, AND STUDY
THE AMERICAN PRESS WHEN IT ARRIVES LATE. ALMOST NEVER DO WE
GET CONCRETE GUIDANCE ON WHAT US AIMS ARE IN ANY GIVEN AREA--
AT LEAST NOT ON A SOPHISTICATED ENOUGH LEVEL THAT AN AMBASSADOR
CAN REPEAT IT TO INTELLIGENT CONTACTS WITHOUT BLUSHING. (THE
AMBASSADOR REPORTS BEING "VIRTUALLY SAVED BY CFR ON THE SHAH'S

WASHINGTON VISIT" WHEN HE PAID HIS FIRST FORMAL COURTESY CALL ON THE IRANIAN AMBASSADOR.) INCIDENTENTALLY, AIRGRAMS FROM WASHINGTON ARE ALMOST USELESS NOWADAYS BECAUSE THEY ARE PRINTED TOO SMALL TO READ -- TECHNOLOGY RUN AMOK.

4. IDEALLY, EACH BUREAU SHOULD SEND OUT A SHORT CABLE WHENEVER AN IMPORTANT EVENT TAKES PLACE, GIVING A BRIEF BACKGROUND AND TELLING US WHAT US POLICY IS AND HOW THIS EVENT AFFECTS IT. THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT NOWHERE IN THE DEPARTMENTAL APPARATUS IS THERE ANYBODY CHARGED WITH CARING ABOUT US MISSIONS ABROAD AS INSTRUMENTS OF FOREIGN POLICY. (IN OUR OPINION THERE SHOULD IDEALLY BE A SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF INFORMING AND USING OUR POSTS ABROAD.) THEREFORE UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT WANTS SOMETHING OUT OF AN EMBASSY (E.G. GOING IN POST-HASTE TO PERSUADE THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO SUPPORT OUR LATEST INITIATIVE), NOBODY IN THE BUREAUCRACY CARES WHETHER EMBASSIES ARE INFORMED. CONSEQUENTLY WE ARE NOT INFORMED. (MOST RECENTLY WE HAVE HAD SUCH A SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL AND THE PROPOSED CAIRO CONFERENCE.) THE ONLY WAY AROUND THIS TYPE OF PROBLEM HAS BEEN TO INSTITUTIONALIZE A MEDIUM OF INFORMATION (NOTABLY CFR, WHOSE TRANSFORMATION INTO A CABLED REPORT WAS A MAJOR STEP FORWARD): THE EDITOR THEN HAS THE JOB OF CALLING AROUND TO GET "NEWS", AND THE EMBASSIES GET A MODICUM OF INFORMATION. WE NEED AND DESERVE SOMETHING BETTER THAN CFR, FOR THE SAKE OF GOOD FOREIGN POLICY, BUT SINCE WE ARE UNLIKELY TO GET IT, FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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GOODNESS' SAKE KEEP SENDING US CFR.

5. HOW TO IMPROVE IT, MAKE IT MORE USEFUL? BETTER EDITING WITHOUT A VOLUME QUOTA, IS THE SIMPLE ANSWER. EDITORS SHOULD AIM AT LESS BACKGROUND AND MORE POLICY GUIDANCE; ARTICLES SHOULD BE MORE RIGOROUSLY EXAMINED FOR GENERAL RELEVANCE (DON'T LET EB WRITE ON KUMQUAT QUOTAS OR EUR WRITE ON ANDORRAN PROBLEMS JUST BECAUSE EB OR EUR DIDN'T HAVE AN ARTICLE LATELY); WRITERS SHOULD BE STRICTLY INSTRUCTED NOT TO GIVE "NEWS" BUT TO GIVE THE INSIDE POLICY STORY. WHEN A US AMBASSADOR MEETS THE FOREIGN MINISTER OR THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR AT A DINNER, HE NEEDS TO KNOW SOME DEGREE OF TRUTH ABOUT US POLICY TOWARDS THE SADAT TRIP TO JERUSALEM, OR THE SHAH'S VISIT TO THE US, OR THE SECRETARY'S TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA: BROMIDES WON'T DO THE TRICK, AND IF WE INFORM OUR DIPLOMATS WE WILL GET MORE RETURN ON THEIR EFFORTS. IF EZRY STORY IN CFR ENDED WITH A SENTENCE OR TWO ABOUT THE RELEVANCE FOR US POLICY, AND IF THE SIZE OF CFR WERE CUT BACK, AND IF EXTRANEIOUS ARTICLES AND PARAGRAPHS WERE EXCISED, AND IF SOMEONE WITH CLOUT INSTRUCTED THE BUREAUS TO START GIVING CFR THE REAL POOP, THEN CFR WOULD BE OF IMMENSE USEFULNESS. EVEN AS IT IS, WE WOULD BE AWFULLY HARD UP WITHOUT IT.

TIGHTEN IT UP, BUT PLEASE KEEP IT COMING.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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